



Public Schools of North Carolina
State Board of Education
Department of Public Instruction

Report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee

ROPES Scholars Pilot Program
SL 2007 – 277 (SB 1030)

Date Due: October 15, 2007
Report #5
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SECTION 1.(a) The State Board of Education, in cooperation with The University of North Carolina Board of Governors and the State Board of Community Colleges, shall develop a framework for a Reaching One's Potential for Excellence (ROPE) Scholars Program. The purpose of the ROPE Scholars Pilot Program shall be (i) to strengthen middle grades education in order to provide students with the opportunity to graduate from high school with the core academic skills needed for postsecondary education and high-skilled employment, and (ii) thereby to reduce the high school dropout rate, increase high school and college graduation rates, and decrease the need for remediation in institutions of higher education.

The framework for the ROPE Scholars Program shall require participating schools to have or be afforded access to high speed, broadband Internet resources and to use SAS EVAAS (Education Value Added Assessment System) or a comparable software system to track student academic progress over time.

SECTION 1.(b) It is the intent of the ROPE Scholars Program to:

- (1) Reduce class size to one teacher to every 17 students;
- (2) Provide annual salary incentives of up to five thousand dollars (\$5,000) to teachers certified in any high-need subject matter area or to support personnel;
- (3) Provide a coordinator position at each participating school to assist in community and parental support;
- (4) Encourage students participating in the program, through agreements executed between the local school administrative unit and students and their parents or guardians, to:
 - a. Maintain a ninety-five percent (95%) attendance rate each year;
 - b. Achieve a minimum of a "B" average;
 - c. Take the PSAT and the SAT or the ACT and achieve an adequate score, as determined by the State Board of Education;
 - d. Meet the standards for admission established by the Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina;
 - e. Engage in community service work each month during the school year for the number of hours determined by the State Board of Education; and
 - f. Evidence good character by not engaging in unlawful conduct.
- (5) Provide students who successfully participate in the program with college scholarships.

SECTION 1.(c) The State Board of Education shall develop a competitive process through which local school administrative units may apply to participate in the pilot program. The State Board shall select three units from different geographic areas of the State, one of which shall be urban and one of which shall be rural. The Program shall be implemented beginning with the 2009-2010 school year.

SECTION 1.(d) The State Board of Education shall develop a process to evaluate the effectiveness of the Program.

SECTION 1.(e) The State Board of Education shall deliver a draft proposed framework to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee by October 15, 2007, and a final proposal to the same committee by December 15, 2007. The report shall include the cost of implementing the pilot program and shall indicate the State laws, rules, and policies that would preclude the implementation of the pilot.

SECTION 2. This act is effective when it becomes law.

In the General Assembly read three times and ratified this the 16th day of July, 2007.

**Proposed Framework for the Pilot of
Reaching One's Potential for Excellence (ROPE) Scholars Program
Session Law 2007-277, Senate Bill 1030**

SUMMARY OF BILL

The State Board of Education, in cooperation with The University of North Carolina Board of Governors and the State Board of Community Colleges, shall develop a framework for a Reaching One's Potential for Excellence (ROPE) Scholars Program. The purpose of the ROPE Scholars Pilot Program shall be

- (i) to strengthen middle grades education in order to provide students with the opportunity to graduate from high school with the core academic skills needed for postsecondary education and high-skilled employment, and
- (ii) thereby to reduce the high school dropout rate, increase high school and college graduation rates, and decrease the need for remediation in institutions of higher education.

The framework for the ROPE Scholars Program shall require participating schools to have or be afforded access to high speed, broadband Internet resources and to use SAS EVAAS (Education Value Added Assessment System) or a comparable software system to track student academic progress over time.

It is the intent of the ROPE Scholars Program to:

- (1) Reduce class size to one teacher to every 17 students;
- (2) Provide annual salary incentives of up to five thousand dollars (\$5,000) to teachers certified in any high-need subject matter area or to support personnel;
- (3) Provide a coordinator position at each participating school to assist in community and parental support;
- (4) Encourage students participating in the program, through agreements executed between the local school administrative unit and students and their parents or guardians, to:
 - a. Maintain a ninety-five percent (95%) attendance rate each year;
 - b. Achieve a minimum of a "B" average;
 - c. Take the PSAT and the SAT or the ACT and achieve an adequate score, as determined by the State Board of Education;
 - d. Meet the standards for admission established by the Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina;
 - e. Engage in community service work each month during the school year for the number of hours determined by the State Board of Education; and
 - f. Evidence good character by not engaging in unlawful conduct.
- (5) Provide students who successfully participate in the program with college scholarships.

THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION SHALL

- Deliver a draft proposed framework to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee by October 15, 2007 and a final proposal to the same committee by December 15, 2007. The report shall include the cost of implementing the Pilot Program and shall indicate the State laws, rules, and policies that would preclude the implementation of the pilot.
- Develop a competitive process through which local school administrative units may apply to participate in the pilot program.
- Select three units from different geographic areas of the State, one of which shall be urban and one of which shall be rural.
- Develop a process to evaluate the effectiveness of the Program.

The Program shall be implemented beginning with the 2009-2010 school year.

PROPOSED FRAMEWORK FOR THE PILOT OF ROPE SCHOLARS PROGRAM

PROPOSED FRAMEWORK

ELIGIBLE TO APPLY

The State Board of Education will determine local education agencies (LEA) that are eligible to apply for the competitive grant based if:

- (1) 2005-06 grade 9-12 drop out rate (excluding expulsions) is greater than 5%
- (2) 3 year average daily attendance rate is less than 95%

The number of LEAs eligible based on this criteria using 2006 drop out data and 2007 average daily attendance is 44. These LEAs represent all regions within North Carolina and both rural and urban.

COMPETITIVE PROCESS (SELECTING 3 LEAS)

Eligible LEAs will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

1. A submitted outline as to how this program is needed at a middle school(s), how the program will be implemented, and how the program will be monitored.
2. Geographic locations.
3. Rural or urban designation.
4. Number of middle schools with a 2007 composite score less than 70%.
5. Amount of targeted assistance that the State is providing to the LEA or middle schools.

Costing (see intent of the ROPE Scholars Program above)

The cost of this initiative can not be provided because this is a competitive grant and the size of the schools is not known. When the LEAs and schools are determined, an accurate cost can be provided. Following is an estimate of the cost for an average size middle school with 700 students.

(1) Class size reduction to 17 students

Reduce allotment ratio to 1:15 in grades 6 to 8 (the ratio must be below the target to assure sufficient positions for compliance).

14 Positions @ \$53,401 = \$747,614

(2) High need subject areas, limited to no greater than 4 areas, will be defined by Local Boards of Education in selected LEA's. Award a \$5,000 bonus for these teachers (estimated 14 teachers in an average size school using Math, Science and Special Ed for costing purposes.)

\$5,000 plus benefits \$80,836

(3) Community and Parent Coordinator (1 per school)

Average Salary plus benefits - \$60,088

(4) No costing required

(5) Based on discussion with UNC General Administration:

- Scholarships would include tuition and fees.
- Recipients would be required to have a full time course load.
- Scholarships would be for one year.

- Students that successfully complete the program are not guaranteed admission to a UNC institution as they are not open admission, however students will be accepted to a North Carolina Community College.
- Scholarships to student from all sources may not be greater than the cost of tuition and fees.

The following costing is based on the average cost of tuition and fees for all campuses. The average cost may not cover tuition and fees for all campuses. The minimum cost is \$3,020 and the maximum cost is \$5,319 for a resident undergraduate for the 07-08 year.

Scholarship to UNC College at an average of \$4,040 per student per year

10 students	\$40,402
50 students	\$202,010
100 students	\$404,020

Total Estimated cost for each middle school selected: \$1,036,548 (50 Scholarships)